
TRANSPORTATION

North Jersey road, transit projects in line for \$5B

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More than \$5 billion in federal road and mass transit funding would head to New Jersey upon enactment of a \$286.4 billion federal transportation bill that passed Congress on Friday, officials said.

The White House haggled with Congress over funding levels for nearly two years before the House overwhelmingly approved the six-year spending plan for surface transportation Friday. The Senate approved the measure before adjourning later in the day.

President Bush is expected to sign the measure.

Acting Governor Codey praised New Jersey's senators and House members for their work on the bill, known as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2005, a Legacy for Users.

"New Jersey's highways are among the most heavily traveled in the nation," Codey said. "I commend the members of our congressional delegation for their hard work in providing this federal help."

Specific dollar amounts for New Jersey projects were preliminary, but state officials said they were generally pleased with the results.

The bill would provide a 30 percent increase from the last bill, which expired in 2003, state Transportation Commissioner Jack Lettiere said.

"I'm relieved this is done, even if it is 22 months late," Lettiere said. "Now we can get on with our work."

The bill could result in an annual increase of nearly \$200 million of federal funding for the state, Lettiere said.

By THE NUMBERS



Money would go to specific projects to replace bridges, address road congestion, improve safety and upgrade mass transit, he said.

"We plan to put this money to use and put it to use quickly," Lettiere added.

Bergen, Passaic and Hudson counties would receive substantial funds for a number of projects.

"The increase in federal transportation dollars is a welcome change," said Democratic Sen. Jon S. Corzine. "In a densely populated state like New Jersey, these funds will improve the quality of life for all our residents."

"Transportation is the lifeblood of our New Jersey economy," said Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg, also a Democrat. "These projects will improve our quality of life and create jobs."

Rep. Steve Rothman, D-Fair Lawn, said \$9.6 million would be spent on widening and other efforts to ease congestion on Route 17 alone.

"It will not only improve our quality of life, but the federal dollars will relieve local taxpayers from having to come up with these millions of dollars to pay for all of this very important work," Rothman said.

Rep. Scott Garrett, R-Wantage, pointed to improvements on Route 17 from William Avenue in Hasbrouck Heights to the Garden State Parkway and Route 4 in Paramus, a crucial stretch of roadway.

"Improved transportation is one of my highest priorities," Garrett said. "These funds will boost our state's infrastructure and help to enhance future growth and prosperity in the state."

Rep. Robert Menendez D-Hoboken, the senior New Jersey member on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, obtained more than \$1.5 million for North Bergen projects, as well as more than \$104 million for the Liberty Corridor, a proposed series of transportation links for the port of New York and New Jersey.

The goal is to move freight to and from Port Newark and Port Elizabeth while reducing truck traffic on highways. The money also would pay for attempts to revitalize brownfields along the waterfront and attract

New Jersey is due to get more than \$7 billion in the transportation bill. Here's how some of it is allocated:

Bergen County:

- \$9.6 million for Route 17 work from William Avenue in Hasbrouck Heights to the Garden State Parkway and Route 4 in Paramus.

- \$1.6 million for renovation, bridge replacement, new ramps and new retaining walls on Route 46 and Main Street in Lodi.

- \$1.6 million for a 1.3 mile stretch of the Hackensack River walkway from Johnson Park in Hackensack to Riverside Square Mall.

- \$1.2 million to eliminate the traffic circle on Route 46 in Little Ferry.

- \$5 million for road improvements and safety upgrades for Route 9W in Fort Lee.

Passaic County:

- \$14 million for Route 46 improvements and bridge replacement.

- \$9.6 million for reconstruction of the Route 46-Route 3 interchange in Little Falls.

- \$2.8 million for improvements to Clove Road in Little Falls.

- \$3.2 million for reconstruction of Hazel Street in Paterson and Clifton.

- \$1.2 million for preliminary re-engineering of the "Spaghetti Bowl" in Wayne, where Routes 80, 23 and 46 intersect.

- \$880,000 for a downtown streetscape in Pompton Lakes.

- \$400,000 for the Belmont Avenue Gateway Community Enhancement in Haledon.

Mass transit:

- \$80 million for the trans-Hudson Northeast Corridor commuter rail

manufacturing and distribution centers.

"Transportation infrastructure is vital to our economy, and improving it will create thousands of new jobs while making it easier and more affordable for New Jersey families to travel from home to school, work or play," Menendez said.

Also included is money for NJ Transit to work with the Federal Transit Administration to build a second commuter rail tunnel under the Hudson River between North Jersey and midtown Manhattan, said Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-Paterson.

improvements. Funds would support upgrades along the Amtrak-owned Northeast Corridor rail lines in New Jersey; includes funds for electrical lines, guardrail construction and other improvements.

- Unspecified amount for NJ Transit to work with the Federal Transit Administration to build a second commuter rail tunnel under the Hudson River between New Jersey and Manhattan.

"Unless we want to start paving over our back yards, we must continue to increase the ability for New Jerseyans to get out of their cars and into the mass transit system," said Pascrell, a member of the House subcommittee on highways and transit.

Rep. Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, R-Harding, added that residents and travelers passing through the area will benefit from the transportation bill.

"Each of these projects is a win-win for northern New Jersey," Frelinghuysen said. "This bill invests in many important roads and bridges in Morris, Somerset and Sussex counties to ensure that residents and visitors to our area can travel safely, quickly, and with greater convenience."

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